

Walker: Army needs to focus on "human domain"



Echoing Winston Churchill's famous quote, Lt. Gen. Keith C. Walker told the Army: "Gentlemen, we are out of money. Now it's time to think."

Walker, futures director, Army Capabilities Integration Center, and deputy commanding general, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command, spoke on the need for focusing on the "human domain" (if one exists apart from other domains) during the Association of the United States Army's Winter Symposium and Exposition in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

"Lasting strategic success has always been a function of understanding and controlling the human domain," said Walker, who explained that despite this reality "reference to things human is almost entirely absent in [Army] doctrine."

Walker explained how in past conflicts, the U.S. achieved long-lasting strategic success where it had successfully engaged the human domain. And the primary way of doing this is through the use of land power, he said.

"Successful strategies are aimed towards influencing humans" and a "successful understanding and control of the human domain," Walker said.

Using the example of then Chief of Naval Operations Harold Stark's Plan Dog Memo in 1940, Walker outlined how the U.S. military began focusing on Japan as a second-tiered threat with land power and the human domain on the European front elevated to prime concern.

"It was through land power that the U.S. wrestled away Japan's key strategic land posts," Walker said.

He also explained how the U.S. learned that although allied forces had defeated the German army and government during WWI, it had not defeated its people.

"Lasting strategic success is not a function of number of enemy forces destroyed," Walker said. "Many have argued that WWII and the cold war that followed were our last real strategic victories."

He added, "Tactical victories alone have not really transferred to strategic success."

Therefore, the best way to achieve lasting strategic victory is to have "forces that are intermingled with and working with local populations," who can apply "discriminate use of force that influences events in real time."

Walker also emphasized the need for a lighter, more mobile land power force, with an immediately-deployable presence in key regions, that is therefore able to prevent, shape, and/or win any conflicts that may arise from the numerous potential threats worldwide – including ethnic and sectarian conflicts, collapsed or destabilized states, nefarious regional powers (like Iran or North Korea), and humanitarian crises.

"The ability to achieve by force what other means have not is ingrained in our military culture, in almost all we do," Walker said.